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REARRANGEMENT OF THE CERAMIC SECTION

ITALIAN MAJOLICA

MANY of the more important examples of the ceramic department have lately been brought out from the wall cases and displayed in glass cases in the middle of the aisle of Gallery 5. By reason of this shifting a better appreciation may be had of the rich enamels and lustrous glazes that embellish the various plates, bowls, etc., that constitute the Museum's collection of majolica.

The new arrangement plans to show the various wares of the Hither-Orient in chronological order. Beginning with a case of examples of glass enamels, the so-called faience of ancient Egypt, the arrangement will follow the development of the art through the earlier wares of Syria, Persia, and other eastern countries until the lustre-wares of the Saracens are reached. These will be found immediately preceding the majolica of Italy, since to the Saracenic potters of Cairo, Valencia and Malaga, Italy owed so much of her activity and success in ceramic art during the early years of the sixteenth century.

In the southernmost case of the Italian section, there are many examples of the large plateaux (*bacili*) which, decorated with scenes from biblical history or classical mythology, with amatory figures, mottoes or coats-of-arms, were used solely as embellishments for the side-board or wall of palace or monastery. One of these (Fig. 1) has a naive amatory motive—that of a heart torn asunder. A pair of lustred Diruta plates shows a decided Moorish influence in design, while a large flat dish and graceful ewer, enameled in white and gilded, are unusually good examples of the rare Faentine white.

The two following cases are filled with choice specimens of majolica, lent to the museum by Mr. V. Everit Macy, numbering twenty-three pieces and containing striking examples of the early Gubbio

lustred ware; two magnificent plates, the work from the Casa Pirota of Faenza, an Urbino plate lustred at Gubbio and signed with the initials of Maestro Giorgio himself, and a Gubbio plateau and bowl (*scudella*) dated 1524, marvels of enamel and lustre, which may easily rank among the most remarkable productions of the house of the Andreoli. There are, also, an exceedingly fine pair of Castel Durante pharmacy vases decorated, a *candeliere*, in the richest colors of that factory; a small Caffaggiolo plate embellished with a grotesque design in polychrome against a deep blue ground, and a Gubbio (Pesaro) plate ornamented with a radiant design enriched with gold and pearly lustres. In addition to these are a small blue Faenza plate decorated in various enamels with a central coat-of-arms, and, flanking the Gubbio plateau to which we have already referred, a pair of richly lustred Gubbio dishes (*tazzæ*) of the raised paste variety, dating from about 1535. The next case, also, devoted to the pieces belonging to Mr. Macy's collections, is equally rich in lustrous glazes and enamels. More noticeable are a deep blue Faenza (Casa Pirota) plate decorated in various rich enamels with a central coat-of-arms supported by *putti*, and surrounded by a border enriched with grotesque designs in that exceedingly decorative style of enameling commonly known as *sopra azzuro*. A large Gubbio plate, ornamented on a deep blue ground with a central coat-of-arms and inscription, a plate aglow with richest mother-of-pearl lustre; a Faenza plateau enameled in ochreous yellows, against a cobalt blue background; a choice example of Castel Durante immediately behind it, together with two good examples of Gubbio lustre ware (upper shelf) are other rare specimens of early sixteenth century ceramic art.

The fourth case contains a number of the bright and harmoniously enameled wares of the Urbino factory, two of which may be noticed as being exceptionally fine. The first (Fig. 2) is decorated with a naively conceived scene of the death of Achilles, while the other (Fig. 3) repre-

sents a scene connected with an incident of the siege of Carthage under Scipio Africanus. On the upper shelf of the

The Urbino plate reproduced in Fig. 5, likewise to be found in this case, is a plate which, from the skill displayed in



FIG. 1. PLATEAU, GUBBIO, 1500-1520

case are a pair of two-handled vases, choice examples of the Diruta and Gubbio factories respectively; an interesting pair of Caltagirone (Sicilian) vases, and three Gubbio lustered plates.

The last case contains three noticeable pieces of lustered enamel ware; to one of which especial attention should be called—an Urbino plate representing the Rape of Proserpina (Fig. 4) decorated in the richest colors of the factory heightened by an overglaze of mother-of-pearl lustre, a later addition at the hands of the Gubbio artists and dating from the year 1544.

the painting of its Raphaelesque decoration, may easily be attributed to the hand of Orazio Foulana.

It is intended to arrange the enameled wares of France immediately following those of Italy, since many of the early *fabriques* of the former country were but "runaways" from those of the latter. Spain, whose later potters learnt much from those of France and Italy, will follow next, after which the porcelain-like enamels of Holland will prepare the way for the study of the various true porcelains of Europe. G. C. P.



FIG. 2. URBINO PLATE, SIXTEENTH CENTURY



FIG. 3 URBINO PLATE, SIXTEENTH CENTURY



FIG. 4 URBINO PLATE, GUBBIO LUSTERED
SIXTEENTH CENTURY



FIG. 5. URBINO PLATE, SIXTEENTH CENTURY